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C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 000636

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAN AND AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/19/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [SO](#) [CA](#)

SUBJECT: CANADIAN-SOMALIS FEAR AL-SHABAB STRENGTHENING

REF: A. OTTAWA 615

[1](#)B. STATE 78953

Classified By: PolMinCouns Scott Bellard, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Rumors continue to circulate within the Somali Diaspora in Canada of increasing Ethiopian and Kenyan meddling in Somalia, according to Farah Aw-Osman, Executive Director of the Canadian Friends of Somalia. Aw-Osman expressed worry that these rumors might fuel Somali-Canadian youth to return to Somalia to seek out training from Al-Shabab. He opined that, once trained, those youth might then stay to fight with Al-Shabab. Despite recent gains by the peacekeeping troops from African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), Aw-Osman was pessimistic about their ability to bring stability to the country. He commented that "the AU protects only the airport, the sea port, and the presidential palace. Al-Shabab controls the rest of Mogadishu," as well as parts of the countryside. He added that a credible Somali national force would be the only means of defeating Al-Shabab, and that only international assistance could create that capacity.

[1](#)2. (C) While unfamiliar with the recent agreement by the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) with PriceWaterhouseCoopers (ref b), Aw-Osman applauded the strategy while noting that it was essential that international donors step up their contributions. He acknowledged that donors would only increase their aid to the extent they believe it will be used for the intended purposes. He added that the TFG continues to be hobbled by its inability govern Mogadishu, let alone the entire country, and he blamed the Djibouti Agreement for creating a "flawed" structure.

[1](#)3. (C) Aw-Osman lamented that Canada sees "no role for itself" in bringing about a long-term solution to stability in Somalia. He commented that the Somali Diaspora in Canada -- with over 200,000 residents -- is the largest African expatriate community in the country, and yet Canadian International Development Agency officers have told him repeatedly that Somalia "does not fall within their mandate," except to provide humanitarian relief.

[1](#)4. (C) In contrast with the perceived "malevolent" intentions of Kenya and Ethiopia in the minds of Somali-Canadians, Aw-Osman praised "the sacrifices" of Burundi and Uganda "to help the people of Somalia." He underscored that both countries have been generous contributors to AMISOM.

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